DRITISH CEREMONIES AND COURT ETIQUETTE.

As a companion-picture to the "Inner Late of the British House of Commons," which Appeared in the August number of the Northern Monthly, I now bring before the reader a few other reminiscences, which, as an illustration of state ceremonies, court etiquette, and that jealous regard for old fogyism still so religionaly preserved by aristocratic England, will doubtless prove interesting on this side the Atlantic.

Foremost in my recollection, and by no means the least important, is the auspicious event by which the 25th day of January, 1858, has been rendered memorable in the annals of British history, namely, by the marriage of the Princess Royal. Now, be it know that the writer was wont to affect the ordinary costume of an ordinary member of the "fourth estate" in the nineteenth century; and when, on the morning of the memorable day in question, he found himself taking his customary French roll and coffee, clad in a blue cutaway coat. with stand-up collar, adorned with silver lace; when he gazed upon the silk inexpressibles that descended only to the knee; when he found his sitting position seriously incommo-ded by a toasting fork rapier attached to his side; and when, lastly, his glance wandered on a cocked hat uncommonly like the singular article of dress that covers the head of the Admiral in Black-eyed Susan, and who sits in judgment on the devoted "William," who "played the fiddle like an angel," he could not divest himself of the idea that he was either going to, or was returning from, one of those masquerades which M. Julien had made so Still, the fact remained that he was going to the palace; and it was not without great mental perturbation that he surveyed his reflection in a glass, and confessed that the kneebreec-inexpressibles, and silk hose, and pumps were not unlike those of a footman, and that, in fact, the general make-up was by no means advantageous. However, nerved by a sense of public duty, he descended to the cab in waiting, and casting a stern glance at the grinning boy at the neighboring grocery. who muttered something about "O crickey and "calves !" was quickly driven off and deposited at the destination whence, with several others in similar ridiculous costumes, he at

body was evidently trying to look extremely at ease, but sadly failed in the attempt; for even "Gold sticks in waiting" were excited by the occasion, and manifested evident signs ot warmth, not to say moisture. After a close scrntiny of our respective credentials, we were in due time led by a variety of passages and corridors—some, through which portions of the procession were to pass, glittering in pur-ple and gold; others, not to be honored by the presence of royalty, in a general condition of doom, dirt, and damp-into the large room

Here all was courtly etiquette, and every-

once proceeded to St. James' Palace.

known as Queen Anne's. It is 11 o'clock, and every seat is occupied,

but a comparatively long period of suspense has yet to elapse. We seize the opportunity to admire the beauty of the scene presented. Tier above tier shine resplendent rows of the loveliest of England's daughters; diamonds sparkle with a reckless profigality; "the wealth of Ormus and Ind" is lavished on dresses that in every hue and tint form a gorgeous parterre of prismatic splendor with chromatropic variations; rubies and emeralds, opals, sapphires, and barbario pearls flash dazzling cornscations through a mingled mass of waving feathers, gauzy lace work, and costly fabrics of the finest looms, while above all gleams the transcendent radiance of a perfect galaxy of eyes, any one (or rather pair) of which would have eclipsed the fabled lustre of those of the most perfect houri in the paradise of Mohammed. To contrast with the bewildering beauty of the lovely occupants of the seats are the tall and statue-like forms of the Life-Guards, who stand motionless by the doorways; and, to crown the whole, the bright rays of a meridian sun shed unwonted splender on the glorious scene. At length the "high nobility" are being conducted to their respective places in the Royal Chapel. The ministers, as they pass by, each in their ministerial uniform, naturally elicit various little comments-some favorable; some, and indeed a good many, the reverse. Clanricarde, as he marches past in stately dignity, draws forth smiles of peculiar import and significance from the entire assembly—a circumstance, per-haps, in some measure attributable to his calves, or rather his want of those requisites, but, doubtless, in a greater degree to the fact that at that very moment a memorial was being signed by the most exemplary men of the country against his appointment to office on the ground of immorality. Next came a knot of notables in the uniform of the Prussian diplomatic staff; but as they are generally mistaken for Prussian livery-servants, no one seems to notice them. Then several officers of the household troops, richly caparisoned; and then the door opens, and behold a postman in the post office livery is seen approaching. Such a merry sound of laughter now runs through the room that the postman, disconcerted, looks around; when, to the amazement of all, the features of the postman preve to be those of Mr. Secretary Labouchere, who had apparelled himself in the strange uniform of one of the elder brethren of the Trinity House, and a precious old brother he looks. At last the large doors leading to the Throne Room swing open, and lords and ladies, amid the rustle of thick silks and satins, stand erect to receive the Majesty of A slight pause, a whispering be hind the half-opened portal, and forth trips a lady's maid, bearing a basket. A titter of disappointment, and the parties are re-seated. Another slight pause, and, without any announcement or estentatious display, the Princess of Prussia, the mother of the bridegroom, attended by a group of Prussian and English nobles, enters the apartment and walks towards the Chapel Royal. The whole assembly rises and bows low as the Princess, a comely matron, makes one of those profound courtesies seldom seen elsewhere than on the stage. She passes on, and the company are for a few moments left to themselves. Then a distant sound of trumpets is heard, the doors are flung open, and forth saues the procession of her Majesty. Trumpeters and heralds lead the way, followed by a host of quaintly-dressed officials, strongly suggestive of Kean's theatrical spectacles, but are allowed to pass nnnoticed, every eye being directed towards the sovereign, who now makes her appearance. On the entrance of the Queen, the waving plumes are bent low, and the assembly

procession moves on its way.

Immediately before the Queen is Lord Palmerston, bearing the sword of state. His lordship looks unusually jaunty. He giances around the assembly and then at the sword he carries, and then back again at the tiers of spectators, as if about to ory out "Halt !" and then and there perform the sword trick, or at least pull out a score or two yards of ribbon from his mouth, or go through some other

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does silent homage to her Majesty. A grace-

slight performance, for the amusement of the lookers on. His "getting up," too, is emistently suggestive of Professor Anderson, and altogether, he has a decided "hankeypankey" appearance. Had he made a gri-mace, struck an attitude, and exclaimed:— 'Here we is as we used to was," it would not in the least have caused surprise; and he actually seems to tear himself away from the assembled company, regretting that he couldn't do something funny, and as though it is only the fact of the Queen being close at his heels that keeps him in anything like order. Behind the Queen is a bevy of maids of honor, and, though it is not permitted to say that any lady can be homely, it cannot be denied that the Queen's maids of honor on this auspicious occasion might easily have been more beautiful. Possibly her Majesty thought it judicious to keep Albert out of the way of temptation. The Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, who walk with Lord Palmerston, are scarcely noticed-lost in the attractiveness of the juvenile Premier. Silver sticks in waiting and yeomen of the guard, in themselves a show when alone, bring up the rear, but are not seen, eclipsed by what has gone before. Scarcely more than a minute elapsed before another procession enters-that of the bridegroom; and here the Prussian uniforms and military splendor shine in all their glory. The young Prince appears serious and reserved, but acknowledges gracefully the salute given him by the company. presents the appearance of a well-bred young man, quite self-possessed, but aware that something more serious than usual is

The procession having passed, all is expectation for the arrival of the bride. The Lord Chamberlain having returned from the chapel, the tread of feet and the silvery blast of a trumpet is heard, and, preceded by one or two officers, comes the royal maiden in whose honor all the ceremonies are taking place. Now, the Princess is no beauty; indeed, she has had a narrow escape from being plain; she is, moreover, not well developed for her age, and, clad bridal garments, leaning heavily on her father, her eyes are red with recent weeping, and her whole appearance that of sorrow and dejection, it is impossible not to feel that the marriage of such a child is scacely proper, and that she herself is being made a sacrifice to the prejudices of rank and station. Timidly she returns the salutation that greets her entrance, and, without pausing or delay, the cortège passes on. Behind the Princess walks the King of the Belgians, an old man, who must have well remembered the occasion when he himself, a comparatively poor man, had wedded England's royal daughter, whose early and mysterious death caused so much national sorrow and regret. The associations recalled by his presence are rather painful than otherwise, and, the procession having passed into the chapel, all traces of mirth have disappeared, and the sombre silence is for a time unbroken. Anon is heard in the distance the swelling peal of the organ and the voices of choristers singing the chorale which commences the service. Again all is silence, and, of the events that ensue, the highest aristocracy and those who form the prominent part of the procession are alone the

The scene, as described, was most affecting. In a voice so low and trembling as to be almost inaudible the royal maiden made the customary responses to the service, her agitation being so great that it was feared she would faint and fall, and more than one hand was raised to go to her assistance, when, by a great effort, she mastered her feelings and proceeded with the service; but no sooner was it concluded than, with a gush of tears, she threw herself on her mother's bosom, and, for a moment, the courtly splendor, the royal pageantry, the etiquette of state, were all forgotten in the deep emotion of the girl, about to be taken, perhaps forever, from her mether's

The magnificent hallelujah chorus announces to the outsiders the conclusion of the ceremony. The music changes, and the Wedding March is the signal for the formation of the procession, which now moves towards the throne room. The cannon in the park thunder forth a salute, and a hum of many voices breaks upon the ear. A brief pause, and the roll of carriages, amid the loud shouts of the populace, intimate the departure of the royal cortège, and the marriage of the Princess Royal of England becomes an event of the past.

Not so imposing as the ceremony above de-scribed, but still of interest, is the ceremony of conferring the honor of knighthood. The privilege of witnessing the exercise of this prerogative of the Crown was afforded the writer, during the visit of Queen Victoria to Birmingham, the metropolis of the midland counties, in the summer of 1865, and on the occasion of the inauguration of Aston Hall and grounds as a museum and park for the

Few of the ancient baronial mansions of England possess more historic interest than Aston Hall, at one period the residence of the immortal Watt, by whom was awakened the wondrous power of steam. During the memorable struggle which convulsed the kingdom in the days of Cromwell, the unfortunate Charles I sought refuge there, and shared the hospitality of its then owner, Sir Thomas Holte. The loyal old baronet received the King with befitting honors; but the Parliamentarians, hearing of the King's stay at the Hall, mustered in strong force and attacked the mansion, whose walls still bear the marks of the cannonading. It is recorded that for nearly three days the inmates gallantly withstood the assault. At length, worn out, they were compelled to surrender. The fine old Hall was ruthlessly plundered by the besiegers, the family papers scattered to the winds, and the owner made a prisoner. More than two centuries have passed away, and how changed the scene! Another monarch visits the old mansion, not, however, as a temporary asylum, but to dignify with her presence its in-auguration to the people. Thousands now press forward to the old Hall, not in antagonism to a sovereign fleeing from his subjects, but to welcome the presence of a well-beloved Queen. To describe, lowever, the various associations connected with this time-honored edifice, or the namerous attractions presented in my passage from one fairy scene to another along this royal route, is not my purpose; so, with the reader's permission, we will at once transfer ourselves to the Town-Hall, in order to witness "the worshipful, the Mayor of Birmingham," John Radeliffe, receiving, at the hands of his sovereign, the honor of knighthood.

A dais with an electic front, and approached by three steps richly carpeted, has been erected for the occasion, in the central space immediately beneath the organ gallery. It is protected ful recognition of the deep respect thus mani-fested is given by the Queen, and slowly the by a canopy of the most gorgeous description, supported by massive rich trusses in the form of scrolls, and elaborately gilt. The curtains are of costly purple velvet and hang in graceful profusion, the apex of the structure being surmounted by plumes of catrich feathers. Supported by two emblematic figures is a beautifully wrought shield, bearing the letter 'V,' above which is a regal crown in orimson and cold. The is a regal crown in orimson and gold. The surges and vibrates, royal standard and the flags of all nations in struggles until it

of the canopy, which is lined with rich white silk whereupon the royal arms are richly Three chairs are placed upon the dais, that intended for the Queen being prefusely gilt, and covered with gold embroidery upon a crimson ground, and displaying the royal arms. On either side of the dais, and completely filling the space to the gal-leries, a profusion of exotics and the choicest plants send forth their refreshing perfumes, and nature and art are thus so charmingly allied that neither seems to suffer from the

The Hall is filled with the privileged spectators. The Aldermen and members of the Town Council have taken their respective positions near the throne, and now-preceded by the Mayor and Town Clerk, who, as they walk backward, bowing and scraping at every step, present an appearance extremely ludicrous-the Queen and the Prince Consort advance arm in arm, midst breathless silence, along the richly-carpeted aisle.

Immediately on her Majesty ascending the throne, the great organ peals forth the National Anthem, and the voices of an efficient choir resound throughout the spacious Hall with thrilling effect. The anthem concluded, the Town Clerk, attired in the usual black court-dress, and wearing his official silk robe. steps ferward, and, after a profound obeisance, proceeds to read the address of the corporation. This over, his worship, the Mayorin ordinary court costume, minus the sword, a state robe of scarlet cloth trimmed with black velvet and sable, and covered with chevrons of gold lace, presenting a tout ensemble strongly suggestive of the old sycophant "Polonius" in the play of Hamlet-receives the document from the Town Clerk; and advancing to the foot of the throne, and kneeling on one knee, presents it to the Queen. Her Majesty gracefully responds amidst the profoundest silence, whereupon, at the instance of the Secretary of State, his worship again falls on his knee, and the Queen, receiving, at her command, a sword from the officer in waiting, taps therewith the prostrate form before her, first on the right shoulder and then on the left, while at the same time pronouncing in harlequin fashion the magic words, "Rise, Sir John!"-a command which the venerable recipient of royal favor obeys with marvellous alacrity, and in a manner striking indicative of Pantaloon in the pantomime. A smile of evident satisfaction days over his countenance at the happy thought of his sudden transformation from an unsophisticated burgess into a veritable "Knight of the Shire," and, bending low, he acknowledges with silent gratitude the boon bestowed upon him.

The members of the corporation and other officials are now severally presented to their sovereign by the newly fledged knight. The organ again peals forth the National Anthem, and the ceremony is completed.

It is impossible within the limits of a single article to touch upon the many state forms and ceremonials which crowd upon my memory as peculiar to monarchical England, and I must, therefore, rest contented for the present with a slight retrospective view of the opening of Parliament by the Queen, which may be regarded as the Londoner's grand opportunity for seeing Majesty in all the pomp of state. To hear the royal speech is a privi-lege accorded to but few, and, therefore, the next best thing is to peep at the royal procession on its passage from the palace to the House of Peers.

The Queen is not expected to reach the House before two o'clock P. M., but from early morn the great "unwashed" have been afoot; and from remote Stepney, the wastes of Wapping, and the far distant regions of Stratford and Hornsey, come pouring a steady current of sight-seers, who proceeded at once to take possession of every point where a glance of the royal cortège can be obtained.

By eleven the Royal Park and every available space along the route is crowded. Every tree bears its living load; the palisading furnishing standing-places for a long row of adventurers, who run the risk of being at every moment impaled on its spikes rather than not see the show; and as the time passes, and the crowd becomes denser and more dense, men with planks, tubs, stools, chairs, and crazy benches make impromptu scaffoldings for such of the lieges as choose to pay the demanded sixpence or shilling for their temporary tenure of its creaky space. Still onwards flows the human tide, which by this time has changed its character. Instead of corduroy and cotton dresses, broadcloth, and crinoline are now predominant. Scaffolding stands rapidly rise in value; half-crowns are demanded, and corduroy sells its envied position to "Sydenham pants" and "Noah's Ark coats" at a goodly premiam. The crowd is now immense; it is "boundless, endless, and sublime," and is withal good-tempered, jocular, and at times disposed to harmony-the latter disposition showing itself in assertions, more patriotic than musical, that "Brittannia's the pride of the h'ocean," and that consequently three cheers are required for the red white, and blue; or otherwise breaking out in declarations of instant readiness to lie down and at once expire for the sake of "Bonny Annie Laurie.

At half-past 12, a detachment of Life-Guards, in full state uniform, arrive, and form in couples in front of the curb-stones along the route, behind which the spectators, who have hitherto been held back by numerous relays of police, have now the two-fold opportunity of scrutinizing the colossal forms and well-appointed accou-trements of the "heavy cavalry," and of hav-ing at the same time their respective feet trodden into pulp by the cumbrous hoofs of the chargers.

Let the reader suppose that we have sought for and obtained an eligible site, adjacent to the Parliament Houses. There is nearly an hour to elapse ere the object of our visit is attained. The people are treading on each other's corns, but there is very little ill-humor notwithstanding. Jokes are freely indulged in, and for the most part partake of the con-ventional forms of the House. "I move," says one, "that Mr. Policeman do stand h'out of the way." "I beg to second the motion, cries another. "The h'ayes 'av it," shouts a third, "and we'll 'av the sergeant-at-h'arms in if 'e don't h'obey." Of course the policemen don't laugh—no one ever saw a policeman on duty laugh. A carriage passes, with an elderly lady the sole occupant. "I wonder," exclaims a wag in front of us, "how much that ere lady would give me a year to ride at 'er side; I'm h'open to a h'offer! Now's 'er time! going at a great sacrifice!" Another vehicle follows, containing a corpulent old gentleman. "Oh! that's 'er 'usband," dryly observes the previous speaker. "What! a-going apart from his wife?" inquires a lady with spectacles and a large umbrella. "Yes, ma'am; that's the fashionable way of living now. 'Usbands and wives don't see h'each h'other h'oftener than they can 'elp." Whereupon the inquisitive old lady with the umbrella turus away with a sigh, and declares that she don't know "what the country's a-coming to." By this time the excitement, that has been gradually waking up, becomes intense, and the vast crowd surges and vibrates, and pushes, and is one reething alliance with England are grouped at the back mass of perspiration and impatience.

The words now run round, "They're coming." Presently a horseman, who, it is clear to all, is a trumpeter, appears in sight, but the indescribably costumed individual who accompanies him is evidently a marvel to that large portion of the crowd whose fluffy hats betoken them to be from the provinces. This is a herald, and, having done his share in exciting the risibility of the cockneys and the awe of the country-folk, who take him to be at least a Soldan or a Caliph, he passes on, and all eyes are now directed to the approach ing train of carriages, each drawn by six horses, and containing the royal household. The last of these has passed, and now comes a panse. The Queen is at hand. Along the balconies and from the windows handkerchiefs are fluttering, hats waving, and thousands of throats are shouting loud "huzzas." A detachment of picked body-guards slowly ride by, and are followed by the "beef-eaters" in their ludicrously quaint Elizabethan cos tumes; and lo! the eight cream-colored steeds upon whom devolves the honor of conducting the Majesty of England are in sight. With costly purple trappings, these magnificent ani-mals stalk proudly along, as if conscious of the high duty intrusted to them. At the head of each, on either side, walks a groom in powdered wig and scarlet livery, and now the gor geous state carriage of crystal and gold is before us. The Queen, seated on the right of the Prince-Consort, and wearing a coronet, looks young and happy. Little dreaming of the bereavement which in a few short years she is doomed to suffer, her Majesty bows from side to side, and smiles, as she passes, at some observation just made to her by one of her ladies of honor; but no one seems to know or care who she may be. The Queen is the great object of attraction, and, seeing her, the spectators are satisfied.

The crowd now breaks up, but soon again reforms, in order to once more feast its eves upon the fairy-like procession as it returns amid renewed plaudits to Buckingham Palace, Itinerant newsvenders already shout out, in every direction, "The Queen's Speech," and numberless ballad-singers croak forth their doggerel rhymes, of which the following is a literal specimen:-

"Now, you blooming lasses fine, And away all the funny sights to see.
There's the Queen and Albert gay,
And the soldiers, too, huzza!
You're invited by her Majesty to tea." The Queen is subsequently represented as having addressed the Premier and Secretary of Foreign Affairs in this wise:-

"Now Palmerston, said she. Only listen unto me;
And, Russell, I shall look on you with scorn,
Unless you set to work
In earnest, like a Turk,
And grant a right down stunning good reform."

Amid the din of this and such like balderdash, John Bull, however he may groan under the weight of heavy taxation and aristocratio influence, wends his way homeward in the belief that England is the greatest nation on the habitable globe, and in evident delight at having witnessed that most gergeous and imposing of pageants—the Queen's procession to open Parliament.—Northern Monthly.

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